

FLOODS AND VIOLENCE KILL ACAPULCO'S TOURISM INDUSTRY



Acapulco's tourism industry experienced a major blow when destructive floods reigned in the city destroying almost everything. As if the city residents did not have enough problems such as dealing with the rampant gang violence, the floods were an added setback for the locals.

Perhaps things would have been easier if Acapulco was not in a bankrupt state thus making it harder for the Mexican city to recover after facing such a crisis. Even the mayor, Luis Walton, confirmed the possibility of the city not being able to handle the situation economically.

The floods which hit the city in September caused the worst natural damage ever in Mexico's history. **Hotels, residential homes, schools, hospitals and airports were all affected resulting in damage surpassing \$1.4 billion.** Tourism was largely hit as the hotels within the city faced a withdrawal of customers to below 20 percent after the weeks following the floods. The hotels were then advertising special packages that are usually offered at a double price.

Tourism generates up to two-thirds of the revenue collected within the state of Guerrero making it the highest income earner in Acapulco. The floods coming right after the authorities were facing challenges trying to combat widespread cases such as kidnappings, robbery and gang wars did not make it easy for the authorities to deal with the flooding tragedy smoothly, furthermore tourism decline meant there was less income for the city bank. Though tourism is regarded as an important economic boost to the city, Acapulco was declared bankrupt way back last year even before the flooding crisis.

Acapulco is regarded as the murder capital of Mexico with 536 murder cases in 9 months, making it infamously known for its high murder rate which is a great disadvantage when it comes to tourism marketing. Drug peddling is also rampant within the city due to the large presence of drug cartels in the city but the flooding was the biggest stumbling block to the tourism presence.

An average of about 140 cruise ships usually visit Acapulco but after the floods, the expected number of tourists is only 600 with only 13 boats shipping the travelers, an enormous decline in tourism market. Most of the hotel rooms are also empty with some hotels which usually experience a high number of visitors booking only 20 rooms. As a matter of fact, most of the tourists present in Acapulco are Mexicans.

Though the city has experienced terrible times, investors are positive the tourism industry will rise again when everything settles down.

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